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BY L. D. STARKE.

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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there the frowning turrets of some ancient castle, or the glittering spires, domes and places of a Venice to add to the picture.

"Really! pray who is the enthusiast now, Miss Emma?" said the laughing Ellen. "But, seriously, to my fancy there is more beauty, grandeur and magnificence in that sweet cottage, treasured with the creeping vine and honeysuckle, than in all the palaces that ever graced your famous city."

"Mr. Stanley's opinion, I suppose," replied Emma, ironically; "it is well enough for him who never deems to rise above the common grade of a mechanic, to instill such ideas into a too susceptible mind."

"Emma!" replied Ellen, the indignant blood suffusing her flushed features, "Edmund Stanley is an honest man, and as such should be entitled at least to the respect of Emma Barton."

"Nay, Ellen, I thought not to offend you—or to speak disrespectfully of Mr. Stanley."

"Why, then, that scornful expression? Edmund is not, I grant, one of those flippant, fawning, insignificant coxcombs, whose silly protestations are no more to be valued than the passing gale—but he is a candid, sincere and sensible man, whose occupation, instead of lessening, should elevate him in the opinion of all, even including your own fair self."

"Well, well, Emma, I wish you all the success imaginable, and may you long continue to be thus ready to respond to young Stanley's cause."

"It matters not, Emma—I will no more be trifled with, nor—"

"Come, come, Ellen, east aside that unbecoming frown. If what I am uttering has displeased you, I am sorry for it, and she gently put back the glossy ringlets of her complexion, and affectionately kissed her snowy brow."

"It is all forgiven," replied Ellen, as she returned the fond caress, "but you cannot blame me, Emma, that I am thus sensitive. You are aware that to Edmund Stanley my vows were long since pledged, and, if I could, I would permit, next Christmas we will be united. Edmund's circumstances are now in a flourishing condition, and by that time will warrant the step we have decided upon."

"Well, Ellen, I was too hasty—rash, it may be—and, for the future, will avoid a repetition of the offence. But look—the sun has entirely sunk, and the shades of night are gathering around us. Let us return."

"Willingly," answered Ellen, and they took up their skirts, adjusted their "gipsies" and were soon wending their way through the busy thoroughfares of the city toward their respective residences."

Ellen Harvey and Emma Barton were the only daughters of gentlemen in moderate circumstances, or families who made a "genteel appearance." Almost from infancy, inseparable as the sisters, their friendship was of too ardent a character to admit of any secondary influence, and their entire confidence was mutual.

Notwithstanding their terms of intimacy, the several dispositions of these happy beings were entirely opposite. Emma Barton was excessively fond of making a display, and affecting a show of wealth, which was entirely inconsistent with her father's pecuniary affairs; and nothing gratified her vanity more than to be made an object of attention for some score of those would-be fashionable exquisites, who generally have it a point to force their invidious presence into the social circles of society. However fallacious, this propensity appeared in Emma almost inherent. On the contrary, Ellen Harvey was a modest, unassuming creature, who made no effort to court the society of any save those for whom her feelings dictated a stronger regard than those actuated by the mere formalities which outward forms and ceremonies purport. Even in days of childhood, she had bestowed her young affections on the companion of her school days, Edmund Stanley—and while Ellen was ever happy in the undivided attention of Edmund, Emma was never satisfied unless she could deem herself the possessor of half the hearts in the school-room. In fact, even in those days, she was decidedly a young coquette, the torment of the boys, and the envy of her own sex, save and except her sincere friend Ellen Harvey.

Thus passed their early years—on Emma's part, in one continual and varied round of flirtation—on that of Ellen's, constancy and devotion. It is almost needless to add that this "early love" suffered no diminution as she advanced farther into the vale of years, but what was then deemed but a preference of juvenile prejudice, was now the unclouded and unobscured love of sixteen."

Edmund Stanley was the only son of a poor, yet very respectable and much esteemed old gentleman, who had once occupied a high station in the mercantile world, but owing to unfortunate speculations, and other imprudent investments of his effects, he had become utterly impoverished. After Edmund had left school, his father placed him in charge of a valued friend, a printer, with whom he made rapid advancement in that difficult and justly honored art. At the period of our story, Edmund had been out of his apprenticeship about three years, and during that time, by means of industry, perseverance and frugality, had managed to save sufficient to start him in a business for himself. He had determined, with the acquiescence of Ellen, that it would add greatly to his interest if he were a married man, besides, as he often jocosely remarked, he thought that "two heads were better than one," and accordingly the 25th of December was decided upon as their wedding day. How far correct our young friends were in this very sage conclusion, we leave to the decision of our fair readers.

In a neat, retired street, in one of the most beautiful districts of Philadelphia, stood two splendid three-story brick edifices, and thither, as the great State House bell tolled the hour of eight, came Ellen and Emma, returning from their delightful afternoon stroll. With an affectionate embrace, and mutual assurance of meeting on the morrow, they parted.

## CHAPTER II.

"Until our hearts have twin'd,  
Roots, fibres, leaves and all!"

"We met and parted."

It was the birth-night of Emma Barton. Her parental domain was brilliantly illuminated, sweet strains of music swept by upon the wind, mingled with sounds of joyous revelry. It was Emma's last party in Philadelphia. Her father had engaged in a lucrative business in one of the most thriving villages in the northern part of Pennsylvania, and the succeeding day the Barton family were to take the leave of the city for their new home.

That night, while all other hearts were filled with mirth in the enjoyment of the festive scene, Ellen Harvey sat silent and abstracted, while even the presence of Edmund Stanley could not banish the sad and melancholy reflections that held possession of her ingenious mind. Her friend, the companion of her youthful hours of pleasure, the sympathetic son of her infantile sorrows, was about to bid her a long, perhaps a last farewell. She rose from her seat, and passed to an open window that she might imbibe the cool air, as she felt an almost suffocating sensation. The gentle breeze, redolent with the perfumes of sweet flowers from the garden, gradually allayed the feverish pulsation that oppressed her, when she was aroused from her listless attitude by the anxious voice of Emma.

"Are you unwell?" she inquired, in a tremulous tone.

"No! that is—I am better," replied Ellen, as she looked up into the face of her friend. Emma understood her feelings, and the big tear trembled in her eye.

"Come, Ellen," said Emma, with deep emotion, "let us join the company, or we will be observed," and she gently took her arm, and led the unresisting Ellen to a seat in the centre of the room.

"Miss Barton?" at this moment chimed in a young exquisite, the lengthened locks of whose very ample cranium shone with "Macassar," and whose dialect bordered on the ridiculous. "Miss Barton, favor the company with the very great pleasure of attending to one of those transcendently sublime airs which you quote rarely and condescend to perform in your magnificent voice."

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared out a little urchin, who, till this moment, had sat very quietly in a corner, engaged in the agreeable task of testing his organs of mastication upon a huge pile of unshelled nuts.

The exquisite looked aghast, as he had just paused to listen for the murmur of approbation which he supposed would take place, as a matter of course, on his giving vent to so astonishing a burst of eloquence, when the little fat, chubby-cheeked fellow gave vent also to his feelings in his own peculiar manner. The child was forthwith ejected, but what it was that so tickled his young fancy, none of the company could divine, as none cared to question him. Be this as it may, they all appeared mightily pleased, save and except the exquisite, who looked very demure, and so many thought the child might have been thinking of him.

However, the request was immediately seconded by others in a less ostentatious manner, and Emma rose in compliance, and took her seat at the piano. After lightly passing her taper fingers over the keys, she sang a sweet and popular air. As her clear rich voice gave utterance to the music of the song, her feelings seemed in unison, and she rose from the piano amid a general murmur of delight.

Will Miss Harvey favor the company with one of her choice? politely asked a young gentleman.

Ellen hesitated.

"O, do so sing, Miss Harvey!" echoed several young ladies.

Edmund Stanley rose from a seat beside Ellen, and replied—

"Miss Harvey, ladies and gentlemen, is somewhat indisposed this evening—she is therefore compelled to cast herself upon your generosity—at some future period, she will be most happy to oblige."

"Only one!" urged a young lady. Emma approached at this moment and whispered—

"Ellen, if it is possible, sing."

"I will!" uttered Ellen, and she tremblingly rose from her seat, supported by Edmund, who cast no very approving glance toward that quarter of the room whence issued the last request, succeeding his apology. She seated herself, and commenced "The Light of other Days."

And ere she had completed the first stanza, she became visibly agitated—she paused—again commenced her voice faltered—her hand fell from the keys, and she wept!

Edmund was instantly at her side. He gently led her to the open recess, where the invigorating breeze played upon her pale brow. When she had revived, the company dispersed—and the friends were alone. Sweet is the communion when kindred spirits meet—equally bitter when arrives the parting moment.

The next morning, at an early hour, the Barton family took their departure from the city, and many a lingering look did Emma cast behind, as she reluctantly left the domicile where she had enjoyed so many happy hours. Ellen witnessed their departure, and then retired to the solitude of her chamber, where no tongue can utter feelings which no heart can feel, save those who have been placed in a situation akin to her's.

The 25th of December arrived, and Ellen Harvey became the wife of him she loved so well. Edmund had rented a

small, neat house in V—street, and caused it to be very genteelly furnished. His business affairs, which before his marriage had been in a very prosperous condition, now became doubly so, and far exceeded his most sanguine expectations. He had already made arrangements for "building a house of his own," and one cold, blustering night, himself and Ellen were seated in their little parlour, beside a cheerful coal fire, discussing the probable benefits that would arise therefrom, when a little son of ebony thrust his sable visage into the room, holding in his hand a letter.

"What have you there, Sam?" inquired Edmund, mildly.

"Letter!"—Missus Stanley!"

"Is it possible that the post can be out tonight?"

"Yes, massa! he be so cold he almost froze back!"

Edmund took the letter, looked at the superscription, and handed it to Ellen. He then gave the boy the sum marked as postage.

"I wrote him in Sam, that he may warm himself. Poor fellow! he must be almost perished!"

"Yes, massa! he be too cold for cold for cold, nigger! ha! ha!" chuckled Sam, as he closed the door.

Ellen opened the letter—it was from Emma Barton—she gave it to Edmund, who read aloud—

N—, Jan'y 20, 18—.

Dear, dear Ellen—I received yours of the last inst., and was gratified to learn that you were married, and doing well. I regret my not being present at the ceremony—indeed, I nearly cried with vexation, because father promised that I should visit the city a week before Christmas, but could not fulfil the promise on account of urgent business. We have delightful times here—such parties—such balls—and then such company. O! you would be fair y enchanted, if you were to spend a week with us. Now, if you could only persuade your 'dear Edmund' to take a trip up to see us, I should be very happy. There are lots of beaux here—and a young planter, from the South, has just arrived in our little village, who has created quite a sensation—and I must confess he has some very commendable qualities, besides being handsome and accomplished, he has an immense fortune; he is very particular in his attentions at our house, and I think pretty well of him. My respects to all inquiring friends, and well wishes to your 'dear Edmund.'

Affectionately yours,

EMMA BARTON.

"Poor Ellen!" said Ellen, as her husband closed the letter. "I fear she will yet engage in some luckless adventure, that will embitter all her days. I think we may infer that she is in love with the planter's fortune."

"Heaven forbid!" replied Edmund. "she has many frivolous frailties, but still a good heart."

"She has, indeed," added Ellen, "and it would grieve me if those frailties should lead her into the all-engulfing vortex of trouble."

"We will hope for the best," said Edmund, and they resumed the conversation which the arrival of the letter had interrupted.

CHAPTER III.

"Poor flower!"

So delicate and fragile in thy beauty,  
The earliest blight touched thee, blighted thee!"

In the aristocratic little town of N—, in the northern section of Pennsylvania, stood the mansion of Cornelius Barton, the respected sire of the light-hearted Emma.

It was night. Within that stately edifice, gracefully rearing upon a rich velvet ottoman, was the symmetrical form of the fair girl. Seated beneath the light of a magnificent chandelier, which hung suspended from the centre of the painted ceiling, her arm resting upon the marble surface of a beautiful pier table, and her hand clasping a richly embossed book, was the figure of a young gentleman of commanding appearance, reading aloud the poetic effusions of a favorite bard, to which Emma appeared to listen with breathless attention.

"Exquisite!" exclaimed the thoughtless girl, as in a clear, rich, and almost feminine voice, he breathed forth the selected productions of the poet.

"They are indeed beautiful, my Emma!" he replied, as he softly laid the book upon the table, "and I know of none more so."

"None? canst thou of none?" inquired Emma, as a shade of disappointment lingered for a moment upon her animated countenance.

"Yes! there is one!"

"Do—do recite it!" exclaimed Emma, as she rose from her couch, her beautiful features bright with eagerness. The young gentleman also rose, and with his arm circling her slender waist, and his hand clasped in hers, he gently led the unresisting girl to a rich tapestried window that looked upon a lawn redolent with rare exotics, whose trembling fibres glittered beneath the effulgent radiance of the queen of night.

"The subject is well illustrated, before us," he said, "it is the lover describing to her who holds his heart in thralldom, the home to which, 'could love fulfil his prayers,' he would conduct her."

"A deep vale  
Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world;  
Near a clear lake, margined by fruits of gold  
Of coolest foliage, musical with birds,  
As cloudless, save with rare and roscate shadows,  
As I would have thy fate."

A palace, lifting to eternal summer  
Its marble walls from out a glossy bower  
Of coolest foliage, musical with birds,  
Whose songs should syllable thy name! At noon  
We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder  
Why earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens  
Still left us youth and love! We'd have no friends  
That were not lovers; no ambition save  
To excel them all in love; we'd read no books  
That were not tales of love—that we might a mile  
To think how poorly, eloquence of words

Translates 'the poetry of hearts like ours!  
And when night came, amidst the breathless  
Heavens  
We'd guess what star should be our home when love  
Becomes immortal; while the perfumed light  
Stole through the mists of alabaster lamps,  
And every air was heavy with the sighs  
Of orange groves, and music from sweet lutes,  
And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth  
In the midst of roses!"

Claudian Donay was a total stranger to the inhabitants of the town of N—, until a few weeks previous to the occurrence of the foregoing scene within the mansion of Mr. Barton. None knew his origin or his intentions, save from his own lips. In his manners he was polished and gentlemanly, in person dignified, yet full of grace—in fact, immediately on his arrival he was denominated by the belles of the town a "good-looking fellow."

Many were the smiles lavished upon him by the young ladies, and many the kind glances and so-called nods from ambitious mothers. He was decidedly the 'lion' of the place—no evening company could be five minutes organized, ere Mr. Claudian Donay was the subject for discussion, and an inexhaustible theme it appeared to be. The young gentlemen frowned at this usurpation and monopoly, and the young ladies fawned.

Matters were in a very unenviable position, when Mr. Donay suddenly appeared to be very ardent in his devotion to Miss Emma Barton, and it soon became whispered abroad that the 'rich planter' and Emma were 'engaged.' Nor were these suppositions incorrect, as in less than two months succeeding Mr. Donay's appearance at N—, he led to Hymen's altar the fair Emma, a willing bride.

After the performance of the ceremony, and Mr. Barton had settled with his son-in-law his daughter's dowry, which was no inconsiderable sum, Mr. Donay announced his intention of leaving N—, for his own home in the sunny South. With a light heart, Emma prepared to leave her parental home, for she had never even dreamed of her husband being anything else than what he appeared. Poor, deluded girl, she cared not for the future in the enjoyment of the ideal of her infatuated fancy.

After three days' journey, they arrived in the city of Baltimore, when Mr. Donay suddenly declared that he was compelled to take up a transient residence in that community, owing to urgent business which he was necessitated to transact. He engaged a room in one of the principal hotels, where Emma received every attention that a young bride could desire.

One afternoon, Emma was seated in their apartment, engaged in a avorite volume, when her husband entered, accompanied by a person whom he introduced as a very particular friend. Mr. Donay was very obsequious in his attentions to this individual. Emma wondered whom he could be, and why she had not seen him before, he being so valued an acquaintance. From her first impression, she formed an irresistible antipathy for this person, which it appeared impossible to eradicate. She knew that she had no obvious reason for this predisposition—it was a feeling natural, yet undefinable. She thought she perceived a cease familiarity in him toward her husband—while Claudian appeared to be laboring under a restraint in his presence. It was evident the stranger had been falsely represented.

In a short time he took his leave, in a laughing and sarcastic manner; Emma questioned her husband concerning him, but his answers were altogether unsatisfactory and evasive. This was the first time he had appeared unwilling to confide in his wife, and it deeply wounded the sensitive mind of the ingenious Emma. Could her husband deceive her—was he any less than what he appeared—were the interrogations which her feelings prompted, as she dwelt upon his recent conduct.

In the evening Claudian left her, saying he would return in an hour. Emma inquired not his destination, but when he had departed, she sat down to ruminate. While thus absorbed in meditation, a lady entered the apartment, and softly advancing, gently laid her hand upon her arm. Emma involuntarily stared from her unconscious attitude, and gazed vacantly upon the intruder. Her wandering senses failed to recognize in the lady a very intimate acquaintance.

"Why, Mrs. Donay?" exclaimed the lady, in astonishment, "what has transpired to give rise to that melancholy countenance?"

"Nothing, my friend," said Emma, "nothing I must have been dreaming."

"Dreaming, indeed? Mark me! there's oft a prophecy in dreams? So writes the poet, and who shall him gainsay. But come, Charles sent me to request your presence at a game of whist in our apartment."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Ball—Mr. Donay is not at home."

"Indeed? Well, then, it is business of some urgent import that forms the cause."

"Perhaps so."

"Why Mrs. Donay, you deal in enigmas, and fear to trust me with your confidence. And yet, 'tis strange."

"What is strange?"

"That Mr. Claudian Donay, who has been deemed an example for all good husbands, should so far forget himself as to leave his young bride in solitude."

At this moment they were interrupted by loud and apparently angry voices, proceeding from the street door, immediately beneath the chamber window.

"I tell you I must have the money!"

"Well, have! but a little patience."

"Patience! a man can't live on patience. No! you have carried on this game long enough—I must either have the money, or you go!" the words were lost in the distance.

Emma stood thunder-struck—cold drops of perspiration hung upon her marble brow—her cheek turned to a livid, deathly hue—a convulsive spasm agitated her slight

frame, as she wildly exclaimed:  
"Have I been deceived? Sure it was Claudian's voice. I—his wife—it was impossible that I should mistake it! No! I could not! O, my father, would that I had never left thee!"

The chamber door opened, and Claudian Donay stood within the room. His flushed face, glaring eyes, and staggering pace denoted a victim to the demon of intemperance. With a blasphemous curse, he fell reeling to the floor!

Agitated and bewildered, Mrs. Ball called loudly for assistance. The apartment was immediately thronged with anxious countenances, inquiring the cause of this unusual commotion—but it needed no explanation, the insensible form of Emma, and the intoxicated Claudian, was ample.

Again brought to a consciousness of her situation, Emma prepared herself to abide the result of the coming disclosure. There was a settled look of deep, melancholy despair upon her countenance, mingled with a spirit of determination. Her chamber being again vacant, she sat silently brooding over her misfortune.

Early the ensuing morning, the landlord of the hotel sent up a notice to quit. Emma quietly received the message, and patiently awaited until her husband should awake from his drunken stupor. Bitter were the reflections that occupied her thoughts. How happy had she been to have taken Ellen Harvey's advice.

Claudian rose about eight o'clock, and Emma silently laid within his hand the landlord's notice. He glanced at the paper—a scornful expression passed over his features, and without uttering a word, he took up his hat, and left the room.

For full two hours Emma had been anxiously awaiting her husband's return, when, from her chamber window, she perceived a carriage drive rapidly towards the hotel, suddenly halt at the street door, and a lady and gentleman alight. The next moment she heard her own name pronounced by a voice whose sweet, familiar sound had ever been to her a messenger of comfort. Light footsteps were heard ascending the staircase—the chamber door opened—and the friends were locked in a fond, affectionate embrace.

Happy, indeed, was the meeting of the long estranged Ellen and Emma. Edmund had received information that Emma had taken up a transient residence in Baltimore, and having a desire to visit the "monumental city," he thought this a delightful opportunity, and one which would afford the greatest satisfaction to his affectionate wife.



*Leira*

